

REMARKS

A final Office Action was mailed on October 5, 2004. Claims 1 - 10 are pending in the present application. With the present Response, Applicants amend claim 1 - 10. No new matter is added.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PRIORITY CLAIM

Applicants mailed a Priority Claim as to Japanese patent application no. 2001-020587, together with a certified copy of the Priority Document, on July 10, 2002. Applicants also mailed a Priority Claim as to Japanese patent application no. 2000-356010, together with a certified copy of the Priority Document, on August 1, 2002. While the Detailed Action of the present Office Action acknowledges the claim and document mailed on August 1, 2002, no acknowledgement is made as to claim and document mailed on July 10, 2002, and no acknowledgements are made in the Summary of the Office Action. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide a full acknowledgement as to both claims in a subsequent Office Communication.

OBJECTION TO CLAIM

Claim 1 is objected to with regard to informalities. Specifically, the Examiner suggests that the term "to enclose both the plug-in unit connector" should instead recite "to enclose both the plug-in unit connectors". Applicants amend claim 1 to replace the cited term with "to enclose both the first and second connectors", and respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103

Claims 1, 2, 7 – 10, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 20010004316 to Denzene et al. Claims 3 – 6 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Denzene in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,266,053 to Jamet et al. Applicants amend claims 1 – 13 to clarify the nature of their invention, and respectfully traverse these rejections.

In independent claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 10 and 13, Applicants disclose a telecommunications apparatus that includes a box-shaped subrack having a back wiring board mounting a first connector and a plurality of shell-type plug-in units inserted in the subrack so that a second connector of each of the plug-in units is connected to the connector of the subrack (see, e.g., Applicants' abstract). A flexible, electrically conductive seal is deformed with the mating of the first and second connectors so that the first and second connectors are enclosed and shielded.

Denzene discloses a card module 20 providing EMI protection for portions of a circuit board (see, e.g., abstract of Denzene). Card module 20 includes a thin, electrically conductive gasket 80 that forms a seal between a cover 32 and circuit board 72 of the enclosure to define a compartment 66 that is EMI-shielded (see, e.g., paragraphs [0027], [0031], [0032] and [0033] of Denzene). Arguably, Denzene's card module 20 should be compared to Applicants' claimed shell-type plug-in unit rather than to Applicants' claimed telecommunications apparatus as a whole.

Card module 20 of Denzene includes a connector 102 that is not enclosed in a compartment 66, but rather is positioned outside of the compartment (see, e.g., paragraph

[0042] of Denzene). FIG. 7 of Denzene illustrates a connector arrangement of Denzene mating male connector 102 of card module 20 with a female connector 120 of backplane 17. Denzene discloses that this connector arrangement includes a seal 110 for protecting the connectors 102, 120 from environmental contaminants (see, e.g., paragraph [0045]).

In sharp contrast to Applicant's claimed seal member, Denzene fails to disclose that seal 110 is disposed between an interior portion of the backplane 17 and a lateral surface of card module 20, or to disclose that seal 110 is elastically deformed when connector 120 is inserted into connector 102. Moreover, Denzene fails to disclose that seal 110 is electrically conductive such that connectors 102, 120 are enclosed to provide a shield.

In addition, with reference to Applicants' independent claims 10 and 13, Denzene fails to disclose that card module 20 includes a cover part that is fitted into an opening in backplane 17 to elastically deform a finger gasket, which thereby electrically contacts the cover part to provide a shield for the connectors 102, 120.

With regard to independent claim 12, Applicants disclose a shell-type plug-in unit having an electrically conductive optical fiber seal member with a through-hole of a size capable of admitting an optical fiber, and a slit that extends from an external unit to the through-hole. The optical fiber seal member is compressed after the optical fiber is passed through the slit, and fitted into the through-hole to provide a shield with respect to the opening in the metal casing holding the optical fiber seal member. Denzene fails to disclose an optical fiber seal member as claimed by Applicants in independent claim 12

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13 are not anticipated by Denzene, and are therefore allowable. As claims

3 – 6 and 9 depend from allowable independent claims 2 and 8, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3 – 6 and 9 are also allowable for at least this reason.

CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 1 – 13, including independent claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13, and the claims that depend therefrom, stand in condition for allowance. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Bean', is written over a horizontal line.

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